



Division of Intramural Research

NICHD Science Communication Award
“TmT” COMPETITION
2015
THREE-MINUTE TALKS

In 2014, NICHD DIR launched a competition among intramural trainees at the graduate and postdoctoral level, to communicate in three minutes or less the substance of their research and its significance to improving human health—in such a way that can be understood by a broad scientific audience.

The competition is modeled on one developed originally at the University of Queensland, Australia in 2008 and now employed at other places in Australia, Canada, Belgium, and more recently in the U.S., called the Three Minute Thesis 3MT®.

Objectives:

- Develop scientific communication skills among our trainees
- Showcase intramural science to the general public
- Enhance awareness of the breadth and significance of NICHD research

Eligibility: For entry into the competition, fellows must complete a submission form, including a catchy title and brief description of their research talk, no later than Monday, February 23, 2015, to yvette.pittman@nih.gov. Up to 15 DIR predoctoral and postdoctoral, visiting, and clinical fellows will be invited as NICHD semifinalists to compete for these science communication honors. All participants will receive professional coaching for oral presentation skills and the winners will receive a TmT video clip of their research.

Awards: The five NICHD finalists who are invited to present at the final TmT presentation will receive financial support for a training activity or travel to a scientific meeting. And within our institute, any winners of the NIH-wide competition for either 1st place, 2nd place, or 3rd place will each receive additional support and awards can only be used for *approved travel* to a scientific meeting or for a training activity. **Use for travel is subject to travel ceiling availability.*

In addition, winners will have the opportunity to record their research talks, and the video clip will be professionally produced. The winning recorded presentations may be played at the annual NICHD BSC and/or Advisory Council meetings and used on other occasions, which will promote the research of our trainees.

Timeline: All accepted fellows must participate in the “science communication” preparatory workshops and peer review and individual coaching sessions.

In February, the Alan Alda Center for Communicating Science will lead the first workshop that uses improvisation to help scientists connect with and engage their audience. Led by public speaking coach Scott Morgan, the second workshop in March will offer fellows tips on how to convey their science clearly and quickly, addressing the human health relevance of their research, telling an interesting story with only one slide, using accessible language. In April, fellows will practice their delivery several times, receiving two individual coaching sessions with Scott Morgan and a facilitated peer review sessions. The three-minute talks of all accepted NICHD fellows will be judged by an internal panel of investigators in May, and based on the TmT judging criteria, five NICHD finalists will be selected to advance to the next stage of the competition, which will include trainees from other institutes.

The final TmT presentation and judging event will take place in June, allowing the finalists from various institutes to present their three-minute research talks for a nonspecialized audience, and based on the judging criteria and overall scoring, a distinguished panel of judges will select the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winners.

Rules: Fellows can use only a single, non-segmented PowerPoint slide with animations or video files. No sound and props are permitted. **Presentations cannot exceed three minutes**, and must use only spoken words.

Judging Criteria:

- Ability to clearly and succinctly describe a research project in language appropriate to a general scientific audience
- Have a logical flow that captures and maintains the audience's attention
- Spend adequate time on each element of the presentation, from description of the background to key results, including its relevance to human health
- Enhance the presentation with a clear and concise PowerPoint slide

Questions should be directed to Yvette Pittman in the Office of Education, DIR, NICHD.